

2734 Woodwell Ave  
Milwaukee Wis  
September 12, 1937

Dear Dr. Speer.

The copy of the manuscript of Hatter's life duly arrived a few days ago. Thank you very much for sending it so promptly. We are all three of us reading it again with interest and I am very glad to have it and study at leisure the philosophical and religious views he had.

Sincerely

W. P. Holmes.

My dear Friend

I am so sorry to learn that you are called back to Englewood by the unfavorable condition of little Ethel. We are all praying earnestly that she may not be taken from you. God bless you dear friend.

I brought in a very crude toy which I got of a steel foker thinking it might interest Elliott and Margaret though they could not probably make it for themselves. The instructions are not as clear as they might be and I intended to demonstrate it to you in person.

It is rather puzzling to adults as well as to children how the blade which is set whirling with great rapidity in one direction obeys the command to reverse its course and goes a fast

The other way. It does not at first obey an inexperienced operator and must be trained to do its work properly just as a child must learn by practice.

A more effective way than that given in the instruction, is to hold the (stiff) tooth pick between the thumb and the second finger keeping the nail of the index finger <sup>up</sup> on one face of the square and the nail of the thumb on the other. A little pressure then by the one or the other will send the blade whirling in the opposite direction as the tooth pick is drawn rapidly up and down across the notches. The pressure should be made as far toward the outer edges as possible.

Sincerely

Geo. W. Holmes

Personal

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Boston N. J. July 11 1907

JUL 9 1907

MR. SPEER

Mr. Robert E. Speer

156 Fifth Avenue N.Y.

My dear Friend

I was much interested in Miss Clark's letter, which, as you were at the time absent at the Gen Assembly, I returned to Miss Highie intending to write you personally on your return. But we have been busy getting settled in our new home, which has been a very old home to others, and needed pretty general reconstruction.

Your of July 1<sup>st</sup> has meantime come  
to hand with inclosure from Miss Mont-  
gomery, and Mr. Douglass's account of  
the rebellion in the Teheran school.

I took this in with me on Friday,  
intending to deliver it to you in person,  
but did not find time to visit  
the Mexican House, and now inclose  
it to you herewith, together with  
a note from Miss Montgomery.

We must be prepared, I suppose,  
for a general shaking up in Persia,  
in the ferment of the new and strange  
ideas so suddenly developing in the minds

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of the people. That Persia should have arrived at an appreciable national consciousness in so brief a period seems incredible, and yet there seems to be no doubt as to the fact.

Mr. Stead seems to be making good, and finding the open door that has long waited invitingly, and which I so longed myself to enter. I have just read a letter of Miss. Halliday's of her tour to Persia, together with Casarini's report, both of which bear like testimony to Mr. Stead's. There ought to be more workers who

are free from other duties and can give their whole time to evangelistic work in the villages. Is not this too small a proportion yet, among so many?

I note what you say about the expense of publishing the missionary letters, and of course the bare work of preparing them for publication and giving them proper editorial supervision would be great. Had I a little more confidence in my own judgment I would volunteer for that part of the work were the cost provided

Could you give me a guess at the cost for the Persea field alone? Such letters as this of Miss Holliday's and her unimitable translation of Casabidi's report ought to have a far greater circulation than it is getting.

Mary and Harold are with us here. After Harold decided to go back to Princeton he made a brave fight of it, and has come through much the winner by the general testing it cost him. He now has more confidence in his own powers, and at the same time I believe, more trust in Christ. His eyes glare out two or



three times, and we greatly feared  
he would have to leave in the  
midst of the year but he passed  
without conditions and without  
serious impairment of vision. He  
found congenial work for the vacation  
with the city engineer here in Boston,  
so that he and May can be together  
this summer for the first time in years.

May goes to the Teachers College  
for her Kindergarten course. She decided  
promptly that she did not want to affiliate  
herself with the Ethical Culture School as  
soon as she learned of its religious

attitude. The educator who so strongly  
 urged <sup>upon her</sup> the Ethical Culture Course, though her  
 self eminent in Kindergarten circles  
 was evidently poorly informed as to  
 the facts, as we learned from the  
 Ethical Culture people themselves that  
 Columbia was much better for a  
 student of Mary's attainments and  
 experience.

I have written nothing on "The  
 Book" for three or four months. I  
 can write nothing unless out of my  
 own experience, and that has been  
 wholly lacking in inspiration for

a long time. Can you not give me  
some testimony out of your own experience  
to strengthen my faith in the person-  
ality of God. I have been struggling  
with this problem for five or six years,  
and have once been quite swept off  
my feet by it. While in California my  
feet had almost slipped again beyond  
recall, but I found grace and felt sure  
then that my way was clear before me.  
But my life has been an almost un-  
broken process of disillusionment. "Hope  
springs eternal". The fact tells us,  
and hope has buoyed me up through

an appalling series of defeats and  
 disappointments. I have sought Christ  
 earnestly for more than forty conscious  
 years, but I cannot yet say that I  
 have found him. Save for that one  
 event at Varenh I cannot testify that  
 I have ever known him as a personal  
 presence. In that I do not refer  
 to the objective visualization, which  
 was physical, but to the spiritual ex-  
 perience which accompanied it. Keeping  
 that, I have never <sup>consciously</sup> met God as a  
 personal God, unless it has been in  
 the manifold deliverances which I have

experienced from danger, moral and material. These I have been accustomed to attribute to his personal intervention. But I am compelled to admit that quite as often, perhaps many times more frequently, the deliverance has not come. My bark has often touched the lip of Niagara and then has been caught by a cross current and drawn into an eddy which has secured temporary deliverance. I have never been able to row upstream for a while and to feel that I had really gained power from a hidden source.

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But the disengagement always comes sooner or later, and I find that I have been only borne on the return current, to repeat after awhile the mad plunge down the rapids. I have not yet, it is true, gone quite over the brink to destruction, but there have been many times when I should have been glad to see my craft pointing directly for the abyss, and times when I have been tempted to give it myself an impetus in that direction.

For me there is no middle course. It must be a personal God or nothing.

For such as me, impersonal forces  
have no saving power. If I am  
saved it must be under the category  
of the survival of the fittest. And  
such a deliverance can only come  
through a God who has had me  
in his thought before I was wrought  
in secret, and whose thoughts of love  
and mercy have attended me through  
every detail of my life. A God who  
has not left my destiny to the out-  
come of impersonal forces, no matter  
how exalted in their operation and how  
spiritual in their character, but who, through

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he himself stands within the shadow,  
yet keeps faithful watch upon his  
own.

I do not demand that each  
a God shall reveal himself, even  
to my spiritual vision, for he may  
have good reasons for withholding  
himself. But faith that each a  
God lives and that I live in  
him is my only refuge against  
pessimism and madness. Hence,  
from childhood to old age,  
he has thus persistently stood  
in the shadow, unless in one



possibly questionable instance, how  
may I have the full assurance  
of faith without which I am  
as the impotent man, waiting through  
all the years for the spoken word  
which shall start all the sluggish  
forces of the organism into life?

Religion does not consist in  
temperament. But does it any more  
consist in obedience? I see that  
W. N. Clark agrees with me that  
religion without feeling is impotent.  
Some which exists only in the emo-  
tion is not love, but can love

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permanently endure or can it arise  
without feeling?

I can conceive of a love for  
Christ based on faith, which is  
wholly independent of personal  
motives, is entirely altruistic. a  
love generated by the knowledge,  
or belief, in what he is, and  
what he is and becomes to the  
world. I have tried to live by  
such a faith, but it is too refined  
for so common clay as mine.  
I have tried to live, by faith, in  
a spiritual environment, not refusing

to recognize

the flesh, but refusing to be dominated by it, even in its most tenuous disguises. But I am unequal to the effort. Like George MacDonald's "Steenie" my feet are too heavy to permit me to rise into the upper atmosphere. Faith alone is impersonal, I require a personal Christ to return to the question. How may I know that I live under the government of a Personal God whose plan of life for me is indeed hidden from me, but which I can safely commit to his "against that day", and that I am not the subject of impersonal forces which for the good of the universal organism,

must of necessity ultimately eliminate me and my kind, through an agonizing degenerative process, from existence? For the Greatheart there may be hope in such a gospel, for me there is despair.

Yours affectionately

Geo. W. Holmes

I do not forget the words of Christ to John in prison. "Blessed is he, whose enemy shall not be offended in me." But John had but a few months to wait for the <sup>fulfillment</sup> resolution of his problem. I have waited half a century. And then John was the greatest of the sons of men and I am the least.

(Personal)

RECEIVED

NOV -4 1903

MR. SPEER.

(Pleasantly Nov. 1, 1903)

My dear Mr. Speer.

I ~~very~~ believe that this time I have found the secret of the Lord, and that the question asked you in my letter of a week ago is answering itself. Several times have I found my mind found faith effective to remove mountains, and while I do not expect to get out of the region of mountains, I hope they may no longer block my way to obedience to ~~Christ's~~ command to "abide in him".

After what I have written you, you will not believe me to have ever had any spiritual life. I suppose it is largely true, and that spiritual longing has in me taken the place of life, as it does with the millions of devotees of Brahma

and Buddha. But how can such intense longings fail for a lifetime to find the way, even when seeking by the light of the Gospel. — how without the Gospel can men so earnestly seek God, and fail?

Therefore I have been given power to praise but not to intercede, and I have rejoiced <sup>only</sup> in the hope that with the dawn the sunrise would soon come. I may again be disappointed, but I can never go down much deeper than I have already gone. This time I evidently have a reserve of power which I have never possessed before, or if I possessed it I was incapable of calling it into exercise. Was virtue passed out from you to me at Christ's feeding?

Yours ever gratefully  
Geo. W. Holmes

November 1, 1933

Miss Mary W. Holmes  
3059 North Maryland Avenue  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

My dear Mary:

This summer I spent part of my vacation completing the Memoir of your father and had great joy in re-reading his letters and in making selections from the material which he left me covering his conferences with the Bahais and others in Hamadan.

I have made the Memoir very full and I am not sure whether it is wise or right to include some of the material which I have included, especially the long chapter giving quotations from his letters to me during his last years in America, setting forth in the most moving way the spiritual lights and shadows through which his mind moved in those years. From one point of view we would feel that all this was too sacred to publish. From another point of view it is the very part of the biography that would be most helpful to some people in part as representing the depth of his spiritual life and in part of giving comfort to the great number of those who experience shadows like his who do not have the compensating faith which in the end issue in the full light of day.

There is the further problem now as to whether there would be any possibility of our finding a publisher for the biography. The publishing houses are increasingly careful and conservative as to what they will take and there are only a few houses left that have any interest in missionary biographies, and I know from experience that they can be persuaded only with difficulty to take any new one. Revell published several years ago the Biography of Sir James Ewing" of India but Mr. Revell tells me that they have never sold a third of the edition of 1,000 copies which they printed. They took a year ago the Autobiography of Dr. Wanless but only on condition of a financial arrangement that covered the cost of the plates.

I have just had experience with them also in the matter of Dr. Charles Lewis of China. Revell would only accept this with a payment of some six or seven hundred dollars. In consequence I think Mrs. Lewis and I will print it ourselves, which we can do for this sum and then own all of the books, as we would not have done if the biography was published through Revell, or any other publisher.

November 1, 1933

I must say, accordingly, that I doubt whether we could find any one to publish the Memoir but I should be glad to try when I have made sure that you and Harold approve of what it contains.

I am sending you a copy of it herewith accordingly and should be glad if you would go over it and return it, indicating any changes and especially the omissions which you feel should be made.

I imagine that a publisher would say that it is much too long and that the more we could omit the better. On the other hand one is loathe to get out anything that would represent your father's mind and spirit.

I got your address from Clement Cochran who did not, however, know Harold's address, but said that he understood Harold was in Milwaukee too, so that perhaps when you have gone over the biography you could ask Harold to do so also.

You will be very sorry to hear of the death of Dr. Vanneman, which occurred in Tabriz last Sunday. The cablegram said it was from pneumonia and after only a short illness.

With kind regard to Harold and yourself,

Your sincere friend,

RES:B



Mary H. Holmes

M. E. Spear

Jan. 4. 1934  
3059 No. Maryland Ave  
Milwaukee. Wis

My dear Mr. Spear.

You must think it strange that in all this time you have not heard from us regarding the manuscript.

The facts are that we have not yet been able to read it with sufficient care.

After a hasty perusal, I gave it to Harold in December because he was to have an enforced vacation in that month. But the emergency government-employment-work has kept him so busy that in his

"Payler's vacation" he has spent evenings, Saturdays and Sundays at the office. He has finally given the manuscript back to me for reading this week. I hope that he may be able to finish it when I return it to him next week.

We are enjoying the reading very much but have not yet formed an opinion on the chapter you asked about. I am inclined to think there is a question about including so much of that material but want to read it more carefully before making a judgment.

Wishing you all a very Happy New Year.  
Sincerely,  
Mary W. Stokes

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2734 N. Stowell Ave  
Milwaukee Wis.  
Aug 24th 1934.

Dr. Robert E. Speer  
Prebyterian Board Foreign Missions  
156 Fifth Ave . New York City

My dear Dr, Speer:

I am sending you the manuscript of Father's life under separate cover.

Of the first four chapters I have no criticism to make. They are extremely interesting to those who knew Father well, and I trust also to others who are interested in missionary biography. I have occasionally called attention to typographical errors and to errors in statement of facts, such as chapter I page 16 where the manuscript says that my mother was granddaughter to Dr. Wisner of Lockport. Her grandfather was a minister in Ithaca N.Y. However she was born in Lockport where her uncle Dr. William Wisner was a minister of the Presbyterian church. Incidentally, he was a next door neighbor to my father-in-law Dr. F. J. Baker.

The fifth chapter is to me a very important one. Father told me of this vision at a time when I was questioning the truth of miracles, visions etc. and wondered why they did not occur now. My memory of the verbal narrative had dimmed considerably and Mary had no knowledge of it, so that we are very glad to have the description, comments and interpretation as written by Father. My only suggestion is that there is some repetition and that a good part of the second and third pages might be cut or omitted. The full revised story as started at the bottom of page 3 is not identical but very similar and it seems to me that it would be more effective not to repeat.

In chapter VI I have suggested cutting the letter at bottom of page 4. or placing it in chapter VIII. There is so much introspection and depression in the latter chapter, that I would prefer no further emphasis be placed on that phase of his character.

My impression of Father, and I believe that this impression to be even stronger with those who did not know <sup>him</sup> as well, was that of a jolly extremely sociable man, the life of the party as it were. He had a very hearty laugh and was fond of telling stories and keeping the ball of conversation rolling. Mary tells me that he took special pains to learn Persian poetry so that he could take part in the practice prevalent among educated Persians of quoting a verse of poetry, using the last word of a previous quotation given by one of the party, as the first word of his quotation. I have heard him speak of this practice but I do not know that he was sufficiently conversant with Persian poetry to take part himself.

Mary wishes to gather some more material from Mrs. O.C. Wyman, a cousin of Father, and has asked Aunt Mary Hale to interview Dr. Coan, with the purpose of finding material that would bring out this side of his personality. Mary has also said that she would get together some poetry he wrote at various times and send ~~them~~ to you. I have not seen

seen them since High School days and can not judge of their literary quality.

Mrs. Wyman said that as a young man he had quite a prolonged debate in the news papers, with some man on a religious subject. Would that be of any interest to you?

My impression of Father was that in his active years, he was a forceful man, greatly respected by friend and foe. The latter were usually changed in a short time to friends, He was even somewhat hot tempered, but always extremely penitent, shortly afterward, for having lost his temper. Another characteristic was absolute fearlessness, except perhaps, when he felt obliged to address an audience of any size. I have known him to walk up to his Arabian (partially Arabian) when the latter was rearing on his hind legs and striking out with his front hoofs, and when every body was afraid to go near the beast, and with a word of command pull him down.

On one occasion when there was serious rioting and a miniature battle or series of battles between the government troops and civilians at Hamadan, he went out under fire to attend the wounded and dying. It was reminiscent of civil war days and I feel sure that the danger rather appealed to him than otherwise.

On another occasion a Jew had taken "bast", refuge in the Hawkes' premises, where you were when you had typhoid. A large and menacing mob filled the narrow street and were trying to force their way into the court yard. Father was apprized of the danger to Mr. and Mrs. Hawkes and at once rode over on his well known black horse. He succeeded in dispersing the mob and agreed to call on the Mohamedan Mujtaheed, a fanatic Moslem "Holy Man" who was inciting the trouble. He explained to this gentleman that Americans had treaty rights with the Persian Government that must be respected. This was apparently news to the Mujtaheed. They however became very friendly, and the call was returned, the dignitary in question, riding on a white mule, with perhaps a hundred retainers, who filled our yard to capacity.

My thought in giving you these few episodes is to illustrate certain characteristics of Father's i.e. forcefulness, fearlessness, sociability and humour, though no instance of the latter was given. ~~A certain amount~~ of these things have been brought out, throughout the manuscript, but by far the greater emphasis has been placed on his spirituality, kindness, devotion to duty mysticism, philosophy, and religious depression. At least it seemed to us as if the impression that chapter VIII would give to a stranger was of a rather sad, morbid individual, which I am sure is contrary to the general impression. By following the dates of his letters in that chapter, we find that they correspond very closely to certain periods of great stress, due to the mental condition of Mother and the very depressing circumstances which no one outside of the immediate family can easily comprehend. Of course it was accentuated by his introspection and possibly by heredity. The former reasons of course can not be given to the public. So I am wondering if you could lessen the affect of gloominess by possibly shortening this chapter and yet giving enough to be of help to those who are in similar straits and to bring out the fact as you have done that he triumphed in the end. I notice that a good deal of the same thing is brought out in the latter part of chapter V.

Chapter VII seems to us entirely too long, but we assume that it is material from which you expect to draw, when putting it into final shape. I hardly feel competent to say more on this chapter.

In chapter IX, I think some editing should be done to Miss Montgomery's letter.

I am not sure how much help this letter will be to you. I have tried to be frank and at the same time I do not like to pit my judgement against yours as reviewing books is hardly my line.

Your letter of August 22, came today and I was certainly interested in the comments by the professional reader. They appeared to me to be very favorable. My criticism, if such you may call it, is merely that perhaps too much emphasis is given to certain characteristics and not enough to others but I may be entirely wrong.

I would like to know how it impresses Mrs. Speer.

I hope you will be lenient with the typing of this letter. I am doing it myself as I am on vacation and am no expert at the art.

Mary seems to be improving slowly and we expect in due time that she will be herself again.

Yours very sincerely,

H. R. Holmes.

Barley's Harbor Wis

Aug 26, 1934

P.S. Mary and I deeply appreciate your writing this biography. Am not sure that we have fully expressed this before.

Mary is in very bad shape. A slight improvement lately gives us some hope of ultimate recovery. I did not state this above as I am sending her a copy of my letter to you.

The episodes given above were not given with the purpose of incorporating them in the biography. The incident about the horse is too trivial to mention. I was simply reminiscing.

If Mary is going to send you anything she should do so at once and I will write her to that effect.

Sincerely  
Harold.